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Q. AND A. ON DOMINICAN POLICY—INTERVIEW WITH MANN

The United States military landings in the Dominican Republic have raised many questions about the Administration's objectives and underlying policies toward Latin America. Some of these questions were put by Max Frankel, Diplomatic Correspondent of the New York Times; to Thomas C. Mann, Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs. Mr. Mann, a former Ambassador to Mexico, served until recently as Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs and special adviser to President Johnson for hemisphere affairs, and he is said to have played an important role in the handling of the Dominican situation.

Question: Mr. Mann, how did our military move into the Dominican Republic differ from old-fashioned "gunboat diplomacy"?

Mr. Mann: Well, the United States action in the Dominican Republic was an emergency action taken basically to protect lives and to give the inter-American system a chance to deal with the problem, which is within its competence. As soon as it became apparent that the structure of government had broken down to a point where there was not only no authority capable of preserving law and order but no mechanism by which the Dominican people could freely choose their own government, the United States requested an urgent meeting of the Council of the Organization of American States.

Had the United States been interested in merely the form of legalistic procedures rather than the substance of the fundamental rights of a nation under the O.A.S. Charter, it could have recognized the only organized group existing at that time and claiming to be the government [the three-man military junta, led by Col. Pedro Benoit, which opposed the rebels. That group was succeeded Friday by a military-civilian junta led by Col. Antonio Imbert Barreras.]

It could then have responded to a request from the newly recognized group to send in armed forces. The United States did not follow such a course of action, because this would have amounted to taking sides in the internal struggle. Clearly such a course of action would have been inconsistent with the principles that govern the inter-American system.

Inter-American Force

The meeting of foreign ministers has now decided to create an inter-American force and is now considering ways and means of strengthening the authority of the O.A.S. commission which has already been appointed. All of these efforts would be frustrated if the United States withdrew its forces and thus invited a renewal of anarchy.

There is a further consideration. Available information has suggested that what began as a democratic revolution moved into the hands of a band of Communist agents. If a rebel movement under such control had succeeded in establishing itself as the Government of the Dominican Republic, the events would doubtless have been irreversible.

The action of the United States was not for the purpose of intervening in the internal affairs of the Dominican Republic or for the purpose of occupying that country. The United States forces are not asserting any authority to govern any part of the Dominican Republic. They are not taking sides against the Dominican Republic.

Rather its actions are for the purpose of helping to preserve for the people of their nation their right to choose their own government free of outside interference. We continue to support our commitments for the preservation of the rights of all free peoples of this hemisphere to choose their own course without falling prey to international conspiracy from any quarter.

The United States continues to support the O.A.S. as the institution through which this right can be realized when outside interference makes collective assistance to a sister republic necessary. In all of these respects the United States action is totally different from the situation which prevailed in the period which you refer to as "gunboat diplomacy."

From the Beginning

Q. At what point in this rebellion did the fear of a Communist take-over become a major source of concern?

A. Our intelligence from the very beginning was that the revolutionary movement itself was probably led by elements in the Dominican Revolutionary (pro-

Bosch) party, but it was clear very early that elements of the three Communist parties in the Dominican Republic succeeded in organizing, arming and moving into the streets very sizable paramilitary forces. This was known from the beginning.

Q. From the beginning of the revolt?

A. From the beginning of the revolt. What was not known, and what caused the embassy ultimately to decide that the lives of American citizens required evacuation, was the virtual collapse in the ability of regular forces who were opposing the rebels and consisted chiefly of military, army, navy and air force, to bring the situation under control to the point where lives could be protected.

The movement from a posture of a normal revolution to a situation of almost complete chaos was very sudden and occurred only late on the afternoon of April the 28th.

Q. Is it your judgment that if it had not been for the evacuation problem, if there had been no Americans or foreigners there, that the situation would probably have required some kind of U.S. or O.A.S. presence in a hurry in any case?

A. Given the history of Castro attempts in the past to overthrow Governments in the Dominican Republic—in 1959 Castro organized, trained and equipped an expedition which invaded the Dominican Republic; in 1963 the Castro regime launched another action against the Dominican Republic by sending in a paramilitary team with weapons on the north coast of the island, and in 1963 the Castro and Chinese-oriented Communist parties in the Dominican Republic launched a campaign of open guerrilla warfare against the Government at that time.

In view of this background and the very considerable evidence of Communist influence in the latest movement, I think we, under different circumstances, had no lives been in danger, would have probably gone to the O.A.S. and presented the problem there.

What made it necessary for us to go in quickly, was, as I have said before, the urgent need of saving lives.

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Q. If Castro and Castroism is now a demonstrated threat, after a period in which it seemed to have been reasonably isolated, if Cuba is supplying help or even encouragement to other revolutionists, is the Administration now turning again to the problem of Cuba itself? Can we tolerate Castroism even on this one island?

A. The problem of the continued exportation of revolution and trained guerillas is certainly a continuing problem. I would not want to say that, as a result of this, any action against Cuba is contemplated.

A New Problem

I think this rather points up the fact that the Charters under which the O.A.S. and the U.N. operate were drafted at a time when people were thinking about aggression in terms of 19th-century armies marching across frontiers and that we have a new problem in the hemisphere of how to prevent intervention and aggression through subversion and violence and terrorism by the training of indigenous forces and sending them in for the purpose of overthrowing governments.

I would hope that the Organization of American States can find ways to deal with problems of this kind which we face in the nineteen-sixties so that they can be dealt with quickly and effectively on a collective basis.

Q. Are you thinking of stand-by peace-keeping machinery forces?

A. I wouldn't want to suggest at this time, without consulting the other countries, but certainly the precedent in this case here would suggest the need of some kind of a stand-by force which could move very quickly.

Q. Getting back to the Dominican Republic a moment, granting our strong desire to remain neutral among the parties there, haven't we in fact, in the deed, dealt a severe blow to the political fortunes of former President Bosch and his followers?

A. No, I don't think so. If you read the resolutions which we, of course, supported, which have been adopted by the O.A.S., they all look forward to free elections in which the Dominican people will have full opportunity, without pressures of any kind, to make their choice.

And I would presume that Mr. Bosch, and all other democratic elements in the country, would be perfectly free and able to launch their candidacies and to participate in the campaign. I would hope that this time would not be far off.

Q. Could you define for us the Administration's use of the term "democratic" in this context? Are we talking now about left as well as right authoritarians being ruled out?

A. I would define democratic

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I think in the broad sense of the word meaning all of those who believe in government by the consent of the governed based on free and periodic elections. This would exclude totalitarian regimes from both ends of the spectrum.

Q. There does seem to be, however, a greater sense of urgency in some of the President's declarations that we would not tolerate left-wing totalitarians coming into power anywhere in the hemisphere than in our efforts to remove right-wing totalitarians, which seem to have been more gradual in recent years. Is that a fair reading?

A. Well, there is one difference between what you refer to as left-wing and right-wing totalitarians. Left-wing totalitarians that are members of the Communist apparatus are not really indigenous forces. These are, rather, instrument of Sino-Soviet military power, as was demonstrated in the October [1962 Cuban] missile crisis.

So I think it is natural, when you see left-wing forces under the control and domination of an international military movement with great military power, I think it is only natural that we would express concern about that.

On the other hand, the record of the United States since 1945 has consistently been in favor of collective action without regard to whether the problem was one of right-wing or left-wing totalitarianism. It hasn't been possible to get collective action of this kind, simply because the majority of the American republics have been opposed to it.

Therefore, our position is, I think, entirely consistent.

Q. On the problem of a Communist threat, we are claiming, however, the right to act alone, if necessary, although we would prefer action through the O.A.S. in the hemisphere?

A. In answer to your first question, I based our legal right to act on the need to save lives and to preserve a situation for a period of time which would enable the O.A.S. to act collectively. I don't think we have reached, in this case, the question of whether we have an inherent right of self-defense to prevent the establishment of another potential springboard for aggression against the United States.

We haven't reached it because we have confidence that the O.A.S. can do an effective job in a collective way, and we much prefer to work in a collective way.

Q. We haven't reached it in this case, but we do take that position in general?

A. I wouldn't want to say at

this, this one way or the other.

The Organization of American States is the oldest in the world. Up to this time in its history, it has risen to every crisis. If one believes, as I do, that it will be able to deal with this crisis and with the threat of subversion in a collective fashion, I don't think it is necessary to reach what is essentially a hypothetical question.

Q. Could you tell us, on the basis of your experience in Latin America, how non-Communist leftists in the hemisphere can protect themselves against the kind of Communist infiltration that will discredit them in our eyes or perhaps, even worse, derail them to the point where we feel that action against them is necessary?

A. Let me say that the United States Government, probably because we are a revolutionary people ourselves with a revolutionary tradition, not only understands but welcomes reform and progress and democracy and regimes which bring about the greatest good for the greatest number of people through the achievement of social justice and high and sustained rates of economic growth and political liberty.

Differences Stressed

It is very difficult to give advice to other countries. I wouldn't want to do that. But, clearly, there is a difference in our opinion between reform-minded liberal progressive government who believe in free and periodic elections and what you might call the extreme left which believes in the doctrines of Marx and Lenin and which takes its orders from the Sino-Soviet military bloc, which includes Cuba.

Q. Aren't just a few Communists now capable of discrediting reform-minded movements in the hemisphere by appearing to be infiltrating, making a lot of noise and bringing us to the point where we don't trust the reform movement?

A. I think it is standard Communist doctrine, as well as proven tactics, for Communist groups to form popular fronts and to try to take over from within all kinds of movements.

But there really is no problem, as far as our policy is concerned, unless and until the Communists succeed in actually capturing and controlling a movement.

It is a matter, essentially, of control and, fortunately, most people in Latin America understand the difference between a liberal and the non-Communist left, if one can call it that, and the Communist left. And as long as this distinction is kept in mind there really isn't any political problem.

Q. Does your experience in Mexico give you guidance on why the Mexicans and some of the other leading Latin-American countries have been, in this situation and in general, so reluctant, even after Castro, to come along with us in this effort to develop collective forms of defense against Communists?

A. Mexico is a good example of a left-of-center Government which has accomplished a great deal for its people and with which the United States has had no difficulty at all in cooperating.

I don't think it is proper for me to express an opinion about the Mexican Government's attitude toward collective action, but perhaps I can be permitted to say that this is based on their own historical experience, principally during the time of Wilson, and a long-established policy of opposing collective action on the ground that it violates the principle of non-intervention and self-determination.

Q. Do you see the O.A.S. developing an independent will on this whole question of collective defense and perhaps even developing the kind of machinery or notions about collective defense that we would have trouble accepting?

A. No, I don't think that we would have any trouble accepting any kind of collective action which would safeguard our principal interest, which is the preservation of all the American republics in freedom.

There may, at times, be differences of opinions between countries and between Latin-American countries themselves and between all countries on the best way of getting to a certain objective. But it seems to me that these are relatively unimportant as long as there is broad agreement on what we hope to accomplish, the kind of world of freedom, progress and dignity for the individual that we all strive for and which, indeed, are part of our common heritage.

'Intervention' Defined

Q. We have heard much in the last two weeks about intervention in this context, but haven't we really, through the Alliance for Progress, gone far down the road on a different kind of "intervention"? That is, using economic aid to influence the domestic, economic and social policies of Latin-American countries?

A. Perhaps we had better try to define the word "intervention." It has almost as many meanings as there are people who use it. I haven't read the law books recently, but my recollection is that intervention really means the use by the government of one nation of force, or pressures of any kind

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to force the government of another nation to do something against its will.

If this is the definition you are using, I don't see any problem of intervention in other respects.

Q. I just meant whether there was not a "good" kind of, in effect, collective intervention in the domestic concerns of developing countries? Prodding them to tax reform, rewarding them for land reform and so on?

A. To the extent that let's say the exchange of ideas, travel, debate, persuasion, is intervention, this kind of thing, I think, is going on and is good for all of us. We learn from the experience of others and I would hope that others would learn from the experience of others.

But this is really not intervention as I understand it in the sense that it is used in the O.A.S. Charter.

Q. The O.A.S. and, indeed, the United States had something to do with the collective actions that contributed to Trujillo's downfall in the Dominican Republic. Do you think that the hemisphere was negligent in helping the Dominican Republic along, getting it on its feet, that having used collective action to destroy one government there that it did not follow through properly?

A. It is very hard for me to say that that is true, given the Charter of the O.A.S. and the principles under which we all try to work and live. The Dominican people had been through a long period of dictatorship. They are just beginning to have experience in the kinds of disciplines and restraints that democratic societies need in order to function effectively.

And there is a limit, I think, to

the point where foreign governments can dictate political situations and developments and programs in other countries.

On Responsibility

Q. Have we not really taken on considerable responsibility this time to make sure that we contribute to something pretty good coming out?

A. We certainly would think of responsibility of the entire hemisphere to see that the Dominican people are free to debate and to decide the issues and to elect a government, free, that is to say, of all outside influence. And we hope that the meeting of foreign ministers will come up with plans which will make this possible.

Q. Does the coincidence of our problems in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic and our responses to them suggest that the United States is now interested in preventive action against budding Communist take-overs all over the world?

A. I don't think I would look on what has happened in the Dominican Republic as a fundamental change from the direction of our policy elsewhere in the world. It was really a unique situation where there was an absolute lack of law and order, total chaos and anarchy and therefore a considerable danger that because of this state of affairs a small well-disciplined, well-armed minority would be able to fasten on the country a dictatorship which would be difficult to shake off, as the case of Cuba shows.

All we were trying to do in the Dominican Republic was to preserve the right of free choice of the Dominican people to choose their own government, be it left or right.